

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-10 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider his rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth hereinbelow.

ELECTION OF SPECIES REQUIREMENT

In the Examiner's Office Action dated May 2, 2005, an Election of Species Requirement was set forth wherein the Examiner consider the subject matter of claims 1-3 and 5 as being generic.

As set forth hereinabove, claims 1, 2 and 5 have been amended in order to place the claims in condition for allowance. Claim 1 is still generic to the species as identified in the Examiner's Office Action of May 2, 2005.

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider her Election of Species Requirement. If claim 1 is now in condition for allowance, then a reasonable number of species is permitted in the present application. It is respectfully submitted that two species is a reasonable number. Since claims 4 and 6 depend indirectly back to allowable claim 1, claims 4 and 6 should also be allowable in the present application.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 5, 2003. An initialed copy of the PTO-1449 has been received from the Examiner. No further action is necessary at this time.

DRAWING OBJECTION

The Examiner has objected to the drawings as not illustrating the roll as recited in claims 1 and 5. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection but merely to advance the prosecution of the present application, claims 1, 2 and 5 have been amended to delete reference to the roll. The drawings are now acceptable and comply with the provisions of US Patent Law.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 103

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over McArthur, US 3,559,859, in view of Holbrook et al, US 5,806,746. Claims 2, 3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over McArthur, US 3,559,859, in view of Holbrook et al, US 5,806,746 and further in view of Black et al, US 3,679,112. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is directed to a combination of elements wherein a suction plate includes a flat suction surface arranged to suck the web

material planarly and is provided on the feeding path, for sucking and thereby exerting braking force on the web material which is drawn out by said feeding roller and traveling. A meandering detection means is provided at a downstream side of the suction plate on the feeding path, for detecting deviation of the web material with respect to a width direction of the web material. A meandering correction means includes a guide sleeve provided adjacent to the suction plate to guide the web material in traveling and is arranged to be shiftable with the suction plate in the direction parallel to the width of the web material. A shifting means is provided for shifting the guide sleeve in the axial direction thereof for correcting the deviation of the web material by shifting the suction plate in the direction across said feeding path, when the deviation is detected by said meandering detection means.

As set forth in the third paragraph on page 4 of the Examiner's Office Action, McArthur does not disclose a suction plate acting on the web. Applicants agree that the guide 14 disclosed in McArthur does not correspond to the suction plate of the present invention.

The Holbrook et al patent is directed to an apparatus for sorting mail wherein a web guide 10 is disposed between a form feeder 3 and the cutter 5. The form feeder 3 dispenses a pair of webs 7 and 9 to the cutter 5 for tearing the webs 7 and 9 to form sheets for insertion into an envelope. If the suction device disclosed in Holbrook et al patent is applied to the guide 14 of McArthur, the guide 14 cannot include a flat suction surface capable of sucking a web material planarly. More specifically, since the guide 14 is cylindrical in shape, even if suction holes are formed in its cylindrical surface, the web material is sucked linearly (line-wise), not planarly (plane-wise).

Thus, when the guide is shifted in the direction parallel to the width of a web material, the traveling of the web material can become unstable, which can cause damage to the side edges of the web material.

In contradistinction thereto, the present invention is directed to a combination of elements wherein the suction plate of includes a flat suction surface arranged to suck a web material planarly. In this manner, the present invention can ensure a widthwise stability of travel of the web material and prevent the side edges of the web material from becoming damaged.

The Black patent is directed to a vacuum belt guide means that includes a guiding apparatus 12 wherein a web slack receiving container 14 is provided together with an idler roll 16 for the web W and a wind-up roll 18 for the web. Since the Black patent does not overcome the deficiencies of the primary patents relied on in the Examiner's rejection and does not render obvious the subject matter as set forth in the claims, the Examiner's rejection based on the Black patent has been obviated.

NO PROSECUTION HISTORY ESTOPPEL

Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been amended to clarify the claim language. No prosecution history estoppel would apply to the interpretation of the limitations set forth in claims in view of the fact that this subject matter has been continuously presented since the original filing date of the present application.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

If the Examiner has any questions with regard to this application, he/she is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 so that an interview can be arranged in connection with this application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination.

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

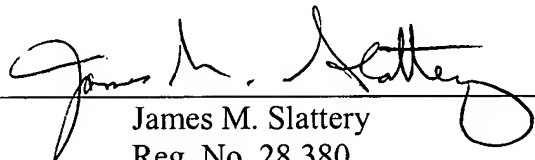
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

A prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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